

CIA-RDP79T01019A000100100001-8

Cocos Island

Status: Uninhabited island in the Pacific Ocean, belonging to Costa Rica

Location: 5°32' N, 87°04' W

300 miles west of Osa Peninsula, southern Costa Rica
Off of the main shipping lanes

Topography: A lava mantle, sharply dissected into rugged terrain.
Highest mountain on western end: Mt. Iglesias, 2,530 feet.
Cliffs 200-600 ft. high around 3/4 of the coast; many vertical.
Good sandy beach 300 ft. wide, 1/4 mile long at Wafer Bay

Vegetation and water supply: Dense tropical vegetation with heavy undergrowth. Coconuts are common.

Grasses grow 6-8 ft. high, edges sharp enough to cut.

Precipitation heavy all year. Numerous streams provide constant supply of good water. Many waterfalls, tallest 400 ft. high.

Climate: Dry season Jan-Mar and Sept-Oct. Temp Mild. Prevailing winds S-SW.

Soils: Volcanic origin. Thin on steep slopes but pockets of good soil are suitable for crops

Animal life: No mosquitoes or poisonous snakes.

Numerous wild hogs and goats, result of early colonization project.

Deer, wild cats, many birds.

A pair of monkeys were turned loose on the island in 1954.

Rats, formerly reported as bothersome, later non-existent.

Probably killed off by wild cats.

Economic resources: Some coal beds in Mt. Iglesias.

Some grassy areas have been proposed for cattle raising.

Good soils

Colonization effort, 1894-1910, raised coffee, bananas, corn, yuca, tobacco - at Wafer Bay.

Anchorage: Best at Chatham Bay, but there is no level land on shore.

Good beach and level land on shore behind Wafer Bay but anchorage there does not hold well.

Movement ashore: Difficult because of steep slopes and cliffs, and the sharp grasses and dense undergrowth.
Best routes along stream courses.

Historical development: Known since early 1500's, and used by pirates/and whaling vessels from then on.

Colonization project began in 1894; lasted for 16 years.

Penal colony project attempted a few years later but failed.

Efforts in 1950's by Americans to set up a Tourist center was turned down by the Costan Rican government because of supply problems.

Continuous efforts for decades by professional and amateur treasure hunters; all with no luck. Costa Rican government requires that any loot is to be divided 50-50 with government.

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Numerous scientific expeditions have visited the island.

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